

## The Chronicle of Higher Education

This year's freshmen at 4-year colleges: a statistical profile

From the issue dated January 22, 2009

### Age, language, race, religion

#### Age on December 31, 2008

17 or younger	1.6%
18	69.5%
19	27.3%
20	1.0%
21 to 24	0.5%
25 or older	0.1%

#### English is native language

Yes	91.2%
No	8.8%

#### Racial and ethnic background

White/Caucasian	71.9 %
African-American/Black	11.3 %
Asian-American/Asian	8.8 %
Mexican-American/Chicano	5.7 %
Puerto Rican	1.4 %
Other Latino	4.2 %
American Indian/Alaska Native	2.6 %
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1.3 %
Other	4.0 %

#### Religious preference

Roman Catholic	25.4%
Baptist	10.6%
Methodist	4.5%
Church of Christ	4.4%
Lutheran	3.6%
Presbyterian	3.1%
Jewish	2.6%
Latter-day Saints (Mormon)	2.3%
Episcopalian	1.3%
Buddhist	1.3%
Islamic	0.9%
Hindu	0.8%
United Church of Christ/Congregational	0.7%
Eastern Orthodox	0.7%
Seventh-day Adventist	0.5%
Quaker	0.2%
Other Christian	12.9%
Other religion	3.0%
None	21.2%

### Making the choice, settling in

#### Number of other colleges applied to for admission this year:

None	15.4%
1	10.8%
2	13.7%
3	15.6%
4	13.0%
5	9.6%

6	7.2%
7 to 10	11.8%
11 or more	2.9%

**College attended is student's:**

First choice	60.7%
Second choice	26.1%
Third choice	8.6%
Less than third choice	4.6%

**Accepted by first-choice college**

Yes	77.8%
No	22.2%

**Miles from college to permanent home**

5 or less	5.4%
6 to 10	5.8%
11 to 50	24.3%
51 to 100	17.3%
101 to 500	33.0%
Over 500	14.1%

**Housing plans during fall term**

College residence hall	77.7%
With family or other relatives	14.7%
Other private home, apartment, or room	4.2%
Other campus student housing	2.5%
Fraternity or sorority house	0.5%
Other	0.3%

**Top reasons noted as very important in selecting college attended**

	All	Men	Women
College has a very good academic reputation	64.7%	59.5%	68.9%
Graduates get good jobs	54.2%	50.5%	57.3%
Was offered financial assistance	43.0%	38.1%	47.0%
A visit to the campus	41.4%	35.7%	46.1%
The cost of attending	39.9%	35.8%	43.3%
Wanted to go to a school about the size of this college	38.5%	31.2%	44.5%
College has a good reputation for its social activities	38.4%	36.2%	40.2%

**Finances**
**Concern about financing college**

	All	Men	Women
None (I am confident that I will have sufficient funds)	35.9%	42.8%	30.2%
Some (but I probably will have enough funds)	53.2%	48.7%	56.9%
Major (not sure I will have enough funds to complete college)	10.9%	8.4%	12.9%

**Intended majors**

Business	16.7%
Professional	13.8%
Arts and humanities	13.5%
Social Sciences	11.5%
Biological sciences	9.3%
Engineering	9.3%
Education	8.3%
Physical sciences	3.2%
Technical	1.0%
Other fields	7.0%
Undecided	6.2%

## Parents

### Parents' education (highest level)

	Father	Mother
Grammar school or less	4.1%	3.8%
Some high school	5.1%	3.8%
High-school graduate	19.7%	17.9%
Postsecondary school other than college	3.4%	3.6%
Some college	15.0%	17.5%
College degree	27.4%	32.5%
Some graduate school	2.2%	2.7%
Graduate degree	23.2%	18.3%

### Estimated parental income

Less than \$10,000	3.7%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	2.8%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	2.5%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	3.4%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	3.3%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	6.3%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	7.3%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	8.3%
\$60,000 to \$74,999	11.0%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14.2%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	17.6%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	8.0%
\$200,000 to \$249,999	4.1%
\$250,000 or more	7.4%

### Status of parents

Both alive and living with each other	70.3%
Both alive, divorced or living apart	25.9%
One or both deceased	3.8%

### Political views

Far left	3.2%
Liberal	31.0%
Middle of the road	43.3%
Conservative	20.7%
Far right	1.8%

### Opinions

Student rated self above average or highest 10 percent in:	All	Men	Women
Drive to achieve	75.2%	72.6%	77.3%
Cooperativeness	73.7%	72.8%	74.4%
Academic ability	69.5%	73.4%	66.2%
Understanding of others	67.2%	65.3%	68.8%
Leadership ability	61.8%	65.7%	58.7%
Self-confidence (intellectual)	60.7%	69.5%	53.4%
Self-understanding	58.5%	63.5%	54.3%
Creativity	56.8%	57.3%	56.3%
Physical health	55.8%	67.8%	45.9%
Emotional health	54.5%	61.9%	48.3%
Self-confidence (social)	52.5%	57.9%	48.1%
Writing ability	47.5%	45.5%	49.2%

Mathematical ability	44.9%	55.0%	36.5%
Spirituality	39.9%	39.3%	40.4%
Popularity	39.4%	47.5%	32.6%
Computer skills	38.4%	48.4%	30.1%
Public-speaking ability	37.7%	41.8%	34.3%
Artistic ability	30.6%	29.4%	31.5%
<b>During the past year, did you frequently:</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
Take notes in class	65.8%	51.0%	78.0%
Support your opinions with a logical argument	57.9%	60.7%	55.6%
Ask questions in class	53.9%	49.9%	57.2%
Seek solutions to problems and explain them to others	51.7%	50.9%	52.3%
Accept mistakes as part of the learning process	51.6%	50.3%	52.7%
Seek feedback on your academic work	47.7%	41.1%	53.2%
Revise your papers to improve your writing	46.6%	36.9%	54.7%
Seek alternative solutions to a problem	44.3%	45.7%	43.1%
Take a risk because you feel you have more to gain	40.0%	43.6%	37.0%
Evaluate the quality or reliability of information you received	37.0%	36.9%	37.1%
Explore topics on your own, even though it was not required for a class	31.4%	34.8%	28.5%
Look up scientific-research articles and resources	22.1%	24.0%	20.6%
<b>Agree strongly or somewhat that:</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
The federal government is not doing enough to control environmental pollution	79.0%	75.6%	81.9%
Through hard work, everybody can succeed in American society	78.6%	79.6%	77.9%
The federal government should do more to control the sale of handguns	72.2%	63.7%	79.3%
A national health-care plan is needed to cover everybody's medical costs	70.3%	65.2%	74.4%
Only volunteers should serve in the armed forces	66.6%	65.6%	67.5%
Same-sex couples should have the right to legal marital status	66.2%	58.8%	72.4%
Dissent is a critical component of the political process	62.2%	66.0%	58.8%
Wealthy people should pay a larger share of taxes than they do now	60.4%	59.5%	61.2%
Abortion should be legal	58.2%	59.1%	57.6%
There is too much concern in the courts for the rights of criminals	57.4%	60.3%	55.0%
Affirmative action in college admissions should be abolished	47.6%	53.3%	42.7%
Undocumented immigrants should be denied access to public education	47.2%	52.6%	42.7%
Marijuana should be legalized	41.3%	46.7%	36.8%
Colleges have the right to ban extreme speakers from campus	40.5%	43.9%	37.6%
Students from disadvantaged social backgrounds should be given preferential treatment in college admissions	39.5%	41.1%	38.1%
The death penalty should be abolished	34.9%	31.2%	38.0%
The federal government should raise taxes to reduce the deficit	28.3%	33.0%	24.4%
Federal military spending should be increased	28.0%	32.2%	24.4%
Realistically, an individual can do little to bring about changes in our society	27.3%	31.3%	24.0%
It is important to have laws prohibiting homosexual relationships	23.4%	30.1%	17.9%
Racial discrimination is no longer a major problem in America	20.1%	25.1%	16.0%

**NOTE:** The statistics are based on survey responses of 240,580 first-year students entering 340 baccalaureate colleges and universities in the fall of 2008. The figures were statistically adjusted to represent the total population of approximately 1.4 million first-time, full-time students at four-year institutions. Because of rounding or multiple responses, figures may add up to more than 100 percent.

**SOURCE:** "The American Freshman: National Norms for Fall 2008," published by the U. of California at Los Angeles Higher Education Research Institute